

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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P 211216Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2424

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 0896

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: EAID, CE

SUBJ: AID GROUP MEETING ON SRI LANKA

PASS AID

REF: STATE 47586

1. MISSION RECOGNIZES IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHAT OUR RESOURCES WILL BE BUT WE BELIEVE IT IS IN US INTEREST TO STATE AT APRIL 9 AID DONOR'S PARIS MEETING AT LEAST APPROXIMATE RANGE OF US ASSISTANCE IN FY 1976.

2. EVEN MOST OPTIMISTIC FORECASTS FOR SRI LANKA MUST INCLUDE SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN FOOD AID, AND AS ONE OF MSA COUNTRIES, SRI LANKA SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO FURTHER EXTERNAL, UNCONTROLLABLE, AND UNPREDICTABLE ECONOMIC VAGARIES SUCH AS SUBSTANTIAL DROP IN US FOOD AID LEVELS. THIS ADDS TO HUMANITARIAN REASONS FOR UNITED STATE TO MAINTAIN TITLE I CONTRIBUTION LEVEL APPROXIATELY EQUAL, IN REAL TERMS, TO FY 1975 LEVEL. SPECIFICALLY, WE RECOMMEND THAT US REPRESNTATIVE STATE THAT USG HOPES PROVIDE BETWEEN 100,000 AND 125,000 TONS OF
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WHEAT FLOUR IN FY 76. (WITH EXCEPTION FY 74, USG

HAS PROVIDED MINIMUM OF 100,000 TONS EACH FISCAL YEAR FOR PAST FIVE YEARS, WITH MORE THAN 150,000 TONS BEING PROVIDED IN FY 71 AND FY 72).

3. IN DEVELOPMENT LENDING, OUR FY 1975 LOAN OF \$8 MILLION WAS ADMITTEDLY QUICK, FIRST, INTERIM STEP WITH EXPECTATION ON ALL SIDES THAT USG WOULD BE FORTHCOMING WITH FURTHER DL FUNDS IN FY '76. IT WOULD BE DISAPPOINTMENT TO GSL AND MIGHT PUT US CREDIBILITY INTO QUESTION IF AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE WERE TO DO ANYTHING LESS AT PARIS MEETING THAN TO ANNOUNCE OUR INTENTION TO LEND AT LEAST \$8 MILLION IN FY 1976. FURTHERMORE, US PLEDGE OF THIS PROPOSED LEVEL SHOULD HELP ENCOURAGE OTHER DONORS TO BE FORTHCOMING WITH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.

4. IN FACE OF 1974-75 MAHA PADDY CROP SHORTFALL, MALNUTRITION IS GROWING PROBLEM. STATISTICS ARE NOT AVAILABLE BUT STUDIES ARE GETTING UNDER WAY, INCLUDING ONE FOR WHICH CARE AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH EXPECT TWO AID-FUNDED CONSULTANTS. NEED HAS IMPRESSED UNICEF AND WFP OBSERVERS SUFFICIENTLY FOR BOTH ORGANIZATIONS TO PROPOSE NEW SUBSTANTIAL NUTRITIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN. CARE/SL HAS BEEN DOING HIGHLY CREDITABLE JOB IN THIS FIELD AND HAS BEEN PHASING DOWN NUMBERS OF RECIPIENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AID'S RECOMMENDATIONS OF A FEW YEARS AGO. WE ARE PLEASED WITH ADDITIONAL INPUTS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS BUT BELIEVE THESE INPUTS MAKE IT IMPORTANT THAT UNITED STATES STATE ITS WILLINGNESS AT PARIS MEETING TO GRANT \$3.4 - \$4.0 PLUS MILLION AER (AND SUPPLEMENTAL AER) SUBMITTED TO WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY.
VAN HOLLEN

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